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Jaclyn Lichter Elected Commission President

The Montgomery County Commission for Women has announced the election of Jaclyn Lichter of North Bethesda as its new president. Lichter is the Political Director for Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500 where she lobbies on local, state and federal issues on behalf of public sector and education employees.

She holds a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Maryland, taught fifth grade at Glen Haven Elementary School in Silver Spring and served on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA).

Lichter is a member of the Board of the Committee for Montgomery and is vice president of Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women. She has served one three-year term on the Commission for Women, chairing its Policy and Legislative Committee, as well as serving one year as 1st vice president.

"There remain many issues of importance to women in the county," Lichter said. "As president of the commission, I hope to focus our work around those issues that will have the greatest positive impact for women and their families right here in Montgomery County. I look forward to continuing the outstanding work that the commission has accomplished over the years."

The Commission for Women is a 15-member board charged by law with the responsibility of advising the public, the County Executive, the County Council and the agencies of the county, state and federal governments on the issues of concern to women. For more information about the Montgomery County Commission for Women, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw.

Mothers and Poverty Agenda for Action

"The face of poverty is a woman's face, and much of the time it is a mother's face." Quote by Tedi Osias, Chair of the Mothers and Poverty Committee

This startling fact was apparent when the Montgomery County Commission for Women issued its decennial *Report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County* in June 2007. The Report found that:

- Families with incomes below the federal poverty line comprise only 3% of the county's population, but they accounted for 30% of families headed by a single woman with young children.
- Families headed by a single woman comprise 15% of county families, but they account for 47% of the county's families with incomes below the federal poverty line.

Given these two pieces of information, the Commission created the Mothers and Poverty (MAP) Committee in July 2007 to concentrate on this issue. The goal of the MAP Committee is to contribute to change in the policies and programs that affect mothers in poverty.

The MAP Committee began its work by hosting three public forums in the spring of 2008 to

investigate the issues affecting low-income single mothers. Researchers, professors, advocates, service providers, service participants and other experts in the field spoke at these forums to help educate the public about the significance of the issues facing women with incomes below the poverty level and about successful strategies to better assist low-income single mothers and their families.

Step two of the Commission's work was the development of a report, which sets up guide posts for policymakers to help single mothers escape poverty. Starting with the information presented in the forums, the MAP Committee examined, in more depth, data on women and poverty in Montgomery County, current policies, programs and best practices. That report, *Single Mother and Poverty: An Agenda for Action*, was published on June 10, 2009.

The report identifies issues that should be addressed to materially improve the circumstances of mothers with incomes below the federal poverty level.

-Continued on page 2-

Focusing Policy and Practices on Mothers

The Agenda is organized into six critical categories:

- Education
- Employment
- Child Care
- Income Supports
- Health Care
- Housing

The Commission for Women and its Mothers and Poverty Committee hope that the Agenda for Action will be a helpful and informative resource. If implemented, the recommendations can improve the lives of many single mothers and their families currently struggling to become self-sufficient. The Commission hopes that legislators and policymakers will implement the recommendations of the Agenda to help improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community.

The recommendations in the agenda emphasize that any attempt to reduce poverty in this most vulnerable population – our community’s young families - should be guided by six principles:

1. *Programs and policies should focus on positive incentives, not punitive measures.* The Commission heard from program participants that incentives and rewards for progress are much more effective and humane strategies to build confidence, competence and cooperation.

2. *Programs and policies that address the needs of children, like high quality child care, universal health coverage and stable housing, also help their mothers achieve self sufficiency.* The quickest way to end poverty for children, is to provide a route to self-sufficiency for their mothers.

3. *Everyone eligible for public benefits should receive those benefits.* Identify existing obstacles and remove them, and conduct outreach to those who could be receiving help now through existing programs, but who are unaware or afraid.

4. *No one should lose public benefits due to contradictory and inconsistent administrative requirements.* Program policy and design should be reviewed to ensure that all programs are working together, and that they are not, in and of themselves, making life more difficult for the very people they are designed to serve.

5. *Use existing successful programs as models for those here in Montgomery County.* One such example is the Family Self-Sufficiency program. Another is the comprehensive Services to Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents Program in the Baltimore County Department of Social Services.

6. *Finally, agencies must work to coordinate benefits and promote and encourage collaboration among the various service providers – not just in general, but in each individual case.*

The full 16-page report may be viewed online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

Montgomery County Woman Elected President of National Organization for Women

Source: Adapted from NOW press release

Montgomery County’s own Terry O’Neill has been elected President of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Ms. O’Neill was the chief of staff to Councilwoman Duchy Trachtenberg, where she was part of many successful initiatives, including a transgender equality law and the establishment of Maryland’s first Family Justice Center for survivors of domestic violence. O’Neill began her career as an attorney in a clerkship at the U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago before practicing law in New Orleans. She taught at the University of California Davis Law School and Tulane Law School. O’Neill’s national positions also include executive director of the National Council of Women’s Organizations. O’Neill has served NOW in leadership positions at the local, state and national levels.

Ms. O’Neill will be serving as President for the next four years of the largest grassroots feminist organization in the country.

"NOW is the organization that fights for the rights of all women no matter the circumstances of their birth, their race or sexual orientation, no matter if they live in poverty or are trying to escape violence," said O’Neill. "My experience with domestic violence, as an abused wife left me humiliated and embarrassed. I only began to talk about this publically five years ago as I realized that to keep quiet was to continue the abuse. I want to empower women and telling my story does just that. Women are fed up with persistent inequality and are ready for change. I am honored and eager to lead NOW in making that change."

Excerpt from the Map Agenda for Action

The *Mothers and Poverty Agenda for Action* addresses many of the most pressing issues affecting low-income single mothers in Montgomery County. Each of the six categories highlighted in the Agenda is an essential element of self-sufficiency and can play a key role in improving the lives of single mothers with incomes below the poverty level. The following are some of the findings and policy recommendations of the report:

EDUCATION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create incentives to stay in school
- Create incentives for girls to prepare for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- Provide training for careers with benefits and better pay
- Change Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Unemployment work requirements
- Encourage TANF recipients to pursue education & training
- Reinforce awareness for all students that education is the escape route from poverty

EMPLOYMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase minimum wage to a living wage
- Provide at least 5 days of paid sick leave per year
- Expand the Family and Medical Leave Act
- Provide pay for Family and Medical Leave
- Make flexible work schedules available for all workers

CHILD CARE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that the percent of a low-wage family's income required for child care subsidy is no more than 10%
- Support the Federal Family Tax Relief Act of 2009
- Implement universal pre-school
- Remove child support cooperation requirement for subsidies
- Encourage employer-sponsored child care benefits

INCOME SUPPORT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

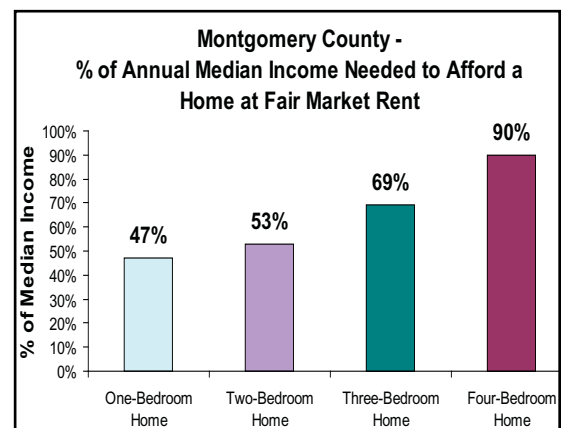
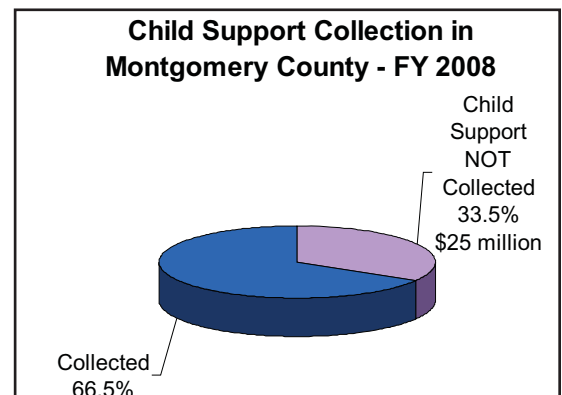
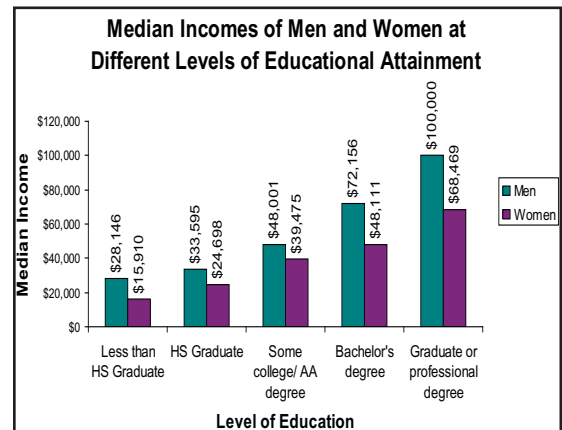
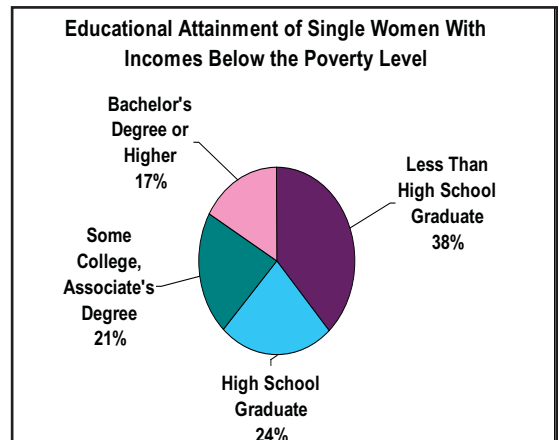
- Conduct outreach campaign about Earned Income Tax Credit
- Encourage employers to inform eligible employees about the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Permanently restore federal funding for enforcement of child support
- Update child support guidelines
- Change the rules regarding reimbursement of child support
- Improve funding for child support enforcement

HEALTH CARE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create universal health care coverage
- Include family planning services in Medicaid coverage
- Expand income eligibility for public health care
- Ensure quality of care
- Promote enrollment for all eligible

HOUSING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand Housing Choice program
- Expand Family Self-Sufficiency program
- Provide additional social services for low-income housing residents
- Increase affordable housing
- Explore housing alternatives



Message from the Outgoing CFW President

I testified at the County Council's public hearing on the Commission's budget for FY 2010 because I want to ensure that our elected officials and the public appreciate what the Commission for Women does for the women of Montgomery County and for the County itself. As far as I know, this is the first time the Commission has participated in County budget public hearings. My testimony follows. Thanks so much for your support and friendship during my two terms as President of the Commission. Warmly, Reggie

Testimony on behalf of the Commission for Women Regina L. Oldak, President April 15, 2009

"My name is Reggie Oldak. I am president of Montgomery County's Commission for Women, and I urge your support for the County Executive's budget for the Commission.

We would all like to believe that women have achieved full equality and that there is no longer a compelling need for advocacy on their behalf, but it's not true.

The issue of poverty as it affects women is a prime example. Across the country, more than one in eight women live in poverty. Poverty is most prevalent among elderly women and single mothers. The Commission's 2007 report on the Status of Women in Montgomery County found that although the overall poverty rate in Montgomery County was 3 percent, the rate among single mothers with young children was 30 percent – ten times higher, right here.

In response to that finding, the Commission has focused on the needs of poor mothers and children. In June, we will release recommendations for protecting this most vulnerable population. We have held forums to highlight some of the causes of poverty and some of the best practices for helping people escape poverty. We hosted a very well-attended program featuring a British expert on the subject – the Montgomery County Commission for Women is the only commission for women in the nation that she spoke to, and she was most appreciative of the opportunity to meet local leaders in the field and exchange ideas.

The Commission also continues to work on behalf of immigrant women who struggle for access to legal rights in the workplace and in the courts. We are publishing a guide to managing the legal process of separation and divorce – in English and Spanish. We recently published a new brochure on violence in relationships – in six languages.

We work on legislation at the local, state, and federal levels to address domestic violence, domestic workers' rights, health care, fair pay, child support, and unemployment insurance coverage, among other issues of central concern to women and families.

As you know, the Commission has coordinated an annual Women's Legislative Briefing for the past 29 years. Thank you President Andrews for speaking to us this past January, and thank you Councilmembers Ervin, Floreen, and Trachtenberg for moderating excellent panels this year. Congresswoman Donna Edwards was our keynote speaker this year. Past speakers have included Dorothy Height, Cokie Roberts, Donna Brazile. We draw state and local legislators, national experts, and an incredibly diverse group of advocates from across the state. Every year, the Briefing is run on a shoe string, with volunteers from about 80 community organizations. This year, we had 800 people attend the Briefing at the Universities of Shady Grove.

The Commission's proposed budget for next year, which is primarily for the Counseling and Career Center, is \$1,201,270, almost 9% less than last year's appropriation. That is an annual expenditure of only \$2.50 for each woman and girl in the county. We will have to reduce our already small staff by almost 16%. The publications for immigrant women and the work of the Mothers and Poverty Committee have been staffed by a woman who will lose her job under the County Executive's proposed budget. There's no money in this budget to continue sending girls from low-income families to the computer summer camps at Montgomery College that the Commission helped establish ten years ago. For nine years, we have subsidized a total of 317 girls – and when surveyed, 84 percent of them said that they were more likely to go to college as a result.

We know that everyone faces economic challenges, especially now. The Commission's Counseling Center is helping more women than ever before cope with job loss, financial crisis, and the stress that those create for families already struggling to survive and is working with the Department of Human Resources to provide special workshops for County employees who may face some of the same challenges.

We urge you to support the County Executive's proposed budget without any further cuts this year. Thank you."

Montgomery County Commission for Women

State Legislative Agenda

The Commission for Women is charged with advocating on behalf of women. Part of this advocacy work is to engage in legislation at the county, state, and federal levels that positively impacts the lives of women. Given the difficult budget year, there were few opportunities for the passage of new or expanded programming in the 2009 General Assembly. However, there were great strides made with the passage of groundbreaking legislation in the areas of domestic violence, health care, unemployment insurance, and fair pay. Maryland's Governor Martin O'Malley called the signing of the bills part of putting families first during tough economic times as well as keeping families safe.

The following are legislative priorities on the Commission's Legislative Agenda that passed the Maryland General Assembly.

<p>Unemployment Insurance for Part-Time Workers (H.B. 310/ S.B. 270) Make part-time workers eligible for unemployment insurance benefits when they lose their jobs through no fault of their own.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 4/14 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act of 2009 (H.B. 288/S.B. 368) Clarifying that an unlawful employment practice with respect to discrimination in compensation occurs when a specified decision or practice is adopted, when an individual becomes subject to the decision or practice, or when an individual is affected by the decision or practice; authorizing the recovery of back pay for up to 2 years preceding the filing of a complaint where the unlawful employment practice is similar or related to a specified other employment practice; etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 4/14 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Family Law - Protective Orders Surrender of Firearms (H.B. 296/S.B. 267) Making it mandatory, rather than discretionary, for a final protective order to require the respondent to surrender to law enforcement authorities any firearm in the respondent's possession, and to refrain from possession of any firearm, for the duration of the order.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 5/19 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Family Law - Temporary Protective Orders - Surrender of Firearms (H.B. 302/S.B. 268) Authorizing a judge in entering a temporary protective order to require the respondent to surrender to law enforcement authorities any firearms in the respondent's possession for the duration of the order; making it a misdemeanor to fail to comply with an order to surrender firearms; etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 5/19 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Domestic Violence - Temporary Protective Orders – Extension (H.B. 98 /S.B. 601) Increasing the period of time, from 30 days to 6 months, for which a judge is authorized to extend a temporary protective order to effectuate service of the order where necessary to provide protection or for other good cause.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 5/19 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Health Insurance-Mandated Benefits Hospitalization and Home Visits (H.B. 41/ S.B. 173) Requiring insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide inpatient hospitalization coverage for a minimum time following a mastectomy; prohibiting imposition of imposing cost-sharing requirements or refusing reimbursement for services provided after a specified time period; etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 5/19 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Health Insurance - Mandated Benefits - Breast Cancer Screening (H.B. 405) Requiring insurers, nonprofit health service plans, etc, to provide coverage for breast cancer screening in accordance with specified guidelines; repealing requirements for coverage of screening mammograms; etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 5/19 Signed by the Governor</p>
<p>Hate Crimes - Prohibitions and Protected Classes – Age, Gender, and Disability (H.B. 560) For the purpose of including age, gender, and disability within the scope of Maryland's Hate Crime statute.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">STATUS: 5/7 Signed by the Governor</p>

Unemployment and You

Source: Nancie Kenney, Career Counselor, Montgomery County Commission for Women

The recent economic downturn is impacting families across the nation. Maryland is not immune to these events. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Maryland's unemployment rate rose from 3.7 in February 2008 to 6.8 in February 2009. Families and businesses in Montgomery County are experiencing this downturn as well. The Commission for Women offers some general advice for anyone facing unemployment and needing to job search. While this advice is for those unemployed, many in our community facing under-employment may find the guidance helpful as well.

- If you are being laid off from your job, leave on good terms. Finish your work responsibly in order to preserve a positive reference.
- Start a job search notebook to organize your contacts and jobs to pursue - this will reduce stress and build confidence.
- Get a written reference letter from your supervisor - be clear about the job-related qualities you want highlighted.
- Dust off your resume - get help making it focus on your skills and abilities.
- Update your work portfolio featuring examples of your most recent work such as writing samples.
 - Get the word out - tell everyone you know that you are job hunting and what kind of job you are looking for.
- Apply for as many jobs as possible - increasing the odds of success. Follow-up on positions applied for.
- If needed, take a class to update necessary skills.
- Volunteer - use your skills in a new setting and make new people connections.
- Register with a temporary agency.
- Make sure all work-related certifications and licenses are current.
- Create your job search profile on major employment websites such as washingtonpost.com and careerbuilder.com.
- Put together 1-2 interview outfits you feel good in - from jewelry to shoes.
- Attend a professional association meeting to network with others in your field of work.

How do I collect unemployment insurance in Maryland?

1) File Online:

<http://dldr.state.md.us/employment/unemployment.shtml>

2) Telephone: *Montgomery County residents call the College Park Claim Center*

301-313-8000

1-877-293-4125 (toll free in Maryland)

What information will I need?

- Your Social Security Number and mailing address.
- A telephone number where you can be reached.
- The name, birth date and Social Security Number of all dependents under age 16.
- If you are not a citizen, proof of your alien status.
- The business name, address, and dates of employment for all employers within the last 18 months. A copy of your W-2 form may be helpful.
- If you seek work through a union, the hiring hall number is required.
- If you were in the military within the last 18 months, Member 4 of your DD214.

RESOURCES

State of Maryland's Department of Labor and Licensing's Unemployment Office:

From Baltimore Area and Out-of-State

410-949-0022

Toll Free Outside Baltimore (but within Maryland)

1-800-827-4839

Commission for Women Counseling and Career Center offers individual career counseling and career development workshops.

Commission for Women

401 North Washington St. Suite 100

Rockville, MD 20850.....Phone: 240-777-8300

MontgomeryWorks offers Montgomery County job seekers the tools and resources to prepare for and obtain a job. The resource centers provide daily job listings and access to computers, printers, and fax and copy machines to aid your job search. They also offer labor market information, career development workshops, and training referrals to eligible job seekers.

MontgomeryWorks

Westfield Shopping Center.....Phone: 301-929-4350

South Office Building

11002 Veirs Mill Road, Wheaton, MD 20902

MontgomeryWorks

Lakeforest Mall, 2nd Level.....Phone: 301-519-8253

701 Russell Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Counseling and Career Center

Upcoming Workshops

Take Charge: Manage Your Career With Power Wednesday, August 12, 2009 6:30PM - 8:30PM (1 session) FEE: \$20

This one-day course encourages you to take charge of your life and career by learning how to eliminate conflicts through the power of conscious choice. Through discussion, role-playing and exercises, this workshop is designed to empower the individual to make choices based on the values of ownership, cooperation, relationship building, responsibility, managing up and problem solving. The result is high productivity, open communication, and the ability to make decisions that benefit both the organization and the individual.

Presented by Melissa S. Fireman MCDP

Managing Your Credit Thursday, August 13, 2009 10:00AM - 12:00PM (1 session) FEE: \$20

Our economy increasingly revolves around the use of credit.

We will discuss:

- how to establish and maintain a good credit record
- how to repair existing credit problems
- what is included in your credit report.

This workshop will help you to become a more confident and wise consumer.

Presented by Carol Tillson, Mason Dixon Funding, Inc.

The Road Back To Work Friday, August 14, 2009 11:00AM - 1:00PM (1 session) FEE: \$30

If you have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time, this seminar will help you understand the current job market and steps you can take to help you become a competitive job seeker.

In this workshop, you will learn to:

- identify your skills
- market yourself to today's employers
- create a workable career plan

During the final hour of the session, representatives from the Montgomery College Education Opportunity Center, the Montgomery County Volunteer Center and a Staffing Services Agency will discuss different paths to land new jobs and enhance your career prospects.

Presented by Melissa S. Fireman MCDP

Forgiveness: A Choice For Freedom

Tuesday, August 18, 2009 6:30PM - 8:30PM
 (1 session) FEE: \$20 per person

The process of forgiveness is different for everyone and different for each situation. Choosing to forgive can have a profound effect on your life. Putting past grievances and emotional wounds behind you can free you to move on to a brighter future.

In this workshop, you will learn about forgiveness and steps to take to forgive yourself and others.

BOTH INDIVIDUALS & COUPLES ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

Presented by Marian Horton, MSW, and Clyde Horton
 Personal Coach

Learning How to Relieve Stress: Getting Back to Balance

Thursday, August 20, 2009 10:00AM - 12:00PM
 (1 session) FEE: \$20

Sometimes it is very difficult for us to understand what stresses us or what we can do to make our lives more relaxed.

During this workshop, we will learn how to recognize different sources of stress and how to use stress management tools to help us bring some balance back into our lives.

Presented by Elizabeth Nyang, Ed.D., LCPC

You Can Do It! Confidence Building For Women Friday, August 21, 2009 10:00AM - 3:00PM (1 session) FEE: \$40

What would you do today if you knew you could not fail? Confidence is like a muscle. The more you exercise it, the stronger you get. What would you need to change to trust yourself, be more self-reliant, self-assured and bold? How would this confidence help you achieve your goals?

This day-long workshop will introduce you to strategies for building self-assurance and taking powerful action.

Bring your own lunch.

Presented by Sharon Fountain, M.S.

Assertiveness Skills for Women

Friday, August 21, 2009 10:00AM - 3:00PM
 (1 session) FEE: \$40

Would you like to express yourself more effectively with your family, friends, and co-workers?

In this workshop, you will learn and practice assertive communication skills. These techniques will help you to develop the ability to honestly and effectively express your opinions, feelings, attitudes, and rights, without undue anxiety and in a way that doesn't infringe on the rights of others.

Bring your own lunch!

Presented by Fran Berger LCSW-C

ONLINE REGISTRATION & PAYMENT AVAILABLE FOR ALL WORKSHOPS!!

For the full calendar of workshops and seminars offered please visit us:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw

Montgomery County Commission for Women
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Call us at 240-777-8300 or visit our website to learn more about our Counseling & Career Center, workshops, programs and other services.

Leland Community Center Renamed Jane E. Lawton Community Center ***In Memory of Former Delegate and Chevy Chase Mayor***

A public ceremony renaming the Leland Community Center in memory of former Chevy Chase Mayor and District 18 Delegate Jane E. Lawton was held on Sunday, June 14 at the center located at 4301 Willow Lane in Chevy Chase.

Former Chevy Chase Mayor Mier Wolf presided at the ceremony that featured remarks and presentations by a host of officials, friends and family, the unveiling of new signage for the facility and the dedication of

a memorial tree. Local elected officials including Montgomery County Isiah Leggett, County Council President Phil Andrews, 8th District Congressman Chris Van Hollen and Maryland State Senator Rich Madaleno, joined Mary Bradford, director of Montgomery County Parks, for remarks and presentations. Pat Baptiste, a personal friend of Lawton's, and the honoree's daughter, Stephanie Lawton, spoke, as well.